

Cellphones and recording devices banned at Courthouse!!! Only if owned by Citizens!! Another Crazy Order from Judge Larry J. "Puddn'head" Wilson!!! Report by Robert A. Williams

North Carolina Law allows any citizen, any person, to record or video government agency meetings. Several years ago we were the first to regularly video Commissioner's and School Board meetings. And nobody said anything because we were in accordance with the law and everybody knew that we knew it.

But, in a totally bizarre exception, Court cases that are open to the public according to North Carolina Law; cameras were not allowed in courtrooms unless specifically allowed by the judge. Of course, all those who watched a full year of the O.J. Simpson murder trial would have a problem with banning cameras, cellphones and any kind of computer or recorder from the courthouse in Cleveland County. Isn't Cleveland County still in the United States and don't citizens still have rights in Cleveland County, NC?

Well, according to the front-page article titled "Cellphones banned in courthouse" in the February 13, 2019 Shelby Star, Judge Larry J. : "Puddn'head" Wilson, Chief District Court Judge in Cleveland and Lincoln counties, has moved Cleveland County to the Twilight Zone, Oz or someplace else that is run by a phony "Wizard" of sorts. An almighty Wizard. Wizard Judge Puddn'head Wilson is his name. "Puddn'head" for all the

appropriate reasons. The Star's star reporter Diane Turbyfill says it is because of Social Media. I say" phooey!"

Puddn'head tells the Star that it is because of a few that everybody has to be inconvenienced. Again, I say Phooey!

Now listen to this. Puddn'head says "not only were there issues of phones ringing during hearings or trials, but people recorded proceedings from within the courthouse then shared them on social media. (There were) some instances (sic) occurred where people in the courtroom were recording witnesses testifying and clerks were doing their job."

If that is not stupid enough, Puddn'head kept on talking junk. **"Banning cellphones in the courthouse is a way to make a safer environment for all."** Apparently forgetting that all citizens are searched by armed deputies, X-rays and metal detectors before getting in the courthouse to begin with. No cellphones, cameras, recorders, fingernail clippers, pocket knives and pistols allowed. And then there all the armed deputies in every Courtroom at all times that a Judge present. It reminds me of the comment my friend Tommy Pruitt once made, "If they weren't so low-down, they wouldn't be so skeered!!"

But folks, all this mess from Puddn'head, the Courthouse Wizard, is hokum! A lie. A deception. Bull-Scat or whatever you want to call it. By law courthouses, hearings, trial and proceedings are open to the public. Citizens can listen to witnesses testifying and clerks doing their jobs. I know that I do when I go down to the courthouse. But I do more. I take my clipboard and a pad of paper and take bunches of notes about everything that goes on in the courtroom that I care to take notes about. Isn't that recording? I publish articles on the internet about what I see and hear in the courthouse. Lots of which get shared on Facebook. And Google too. Some of my articles have gone around the world. Especially like some of my reports about teachers having sex with students a while back.

But there is more about this Star story than meets the eye.

Cellphones, cameras and recording devices have been banned in the courthouse for some time now. Why has the Star, less than half a block away from the Courthouse, just now knowing about or writing about this ban? Does the Star not attend any cases they write about? Or, do they just publish "canned" and one-sided articles sent to them by the courthouse crowd?? One former Star reporter once told me that an article listed as written by "Staff Reports" are canned articles sent out as "Press Releases" by various sources and Cleveland County Government Agencies. Perhaps I should submit a Freedom of Information Act request to the Commissioners regarding how much taxdollar\$\$\$ have been spent buying "good press" from the Star. Kinda like the several hundreds of thousands of dollars that Cleveland County Schools were paying the Star for "consulting services." Not counting all the tax dollar cash Commissioner Eddie Holbrook paid directly to ESPN in the name of his American Legion world Series to broadcast some of the games. Big bucks too. \$100,000 and \$150,000 at a crack. Not counting his \$1,000,000 county check that the county has refused to show me the back of that check.

However, even if this is just another of Judge Larry J. "Puddn'head" Wilson's wild hairs, it should be totally offensive to every good citizen in Cleveland and Lincoln Counties. Courthouses that are by law open to the public should be open to the public. Period!! If a citizen wants to record what he or she is hearing and seeing—more power to the public I say.

But, NOooo! Something is amiss. Something is happening that the Courthouse crowd doesn't want the public to see. Or know about. I will put my court watching higher on my "To Do" list.

Stay tuned folks.